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June 14, 2007

Mr. Richard Baalman  
Chairman  
Missouri Housing Development Commission  
11743 Manchester Road  
St. Louis, MO 63131-4616

Dear Chairman Baalman:

First, thank you for your service to the citizens of the State of Missouri and your willingness to Chair the Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC). Through your efforts and the work of the Commission, thousands of Missourians have affordable housing and our communities are bettered by the presence of quality development projects.

I am sorry that I cannot be with you for the MHDC's annual retreat. I am sending Chief of Staff Ed Martin and Mr. Todd Smith to represent me. As you may have heard, Todd has recently accepted the position of Deputy Director in the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. Ed will take his place as my designee to MHDC.

As you and the other commissioners gather to discuss plans and priorities for the year, I would like to call to your attention a recent comment and recommendation made by my bipartisan Blue Ribbon Panel which I charged with examining the MHDC. During public testimony before the Panel, some raised the question of the advisability of having elected officials serving on the Commission. The Panel recommended that - at a minimum - elected officials should not serve as officers of the Commission due to "...the perceived influence, real or not, that politics could play in the decision making."

I would ask you to go one step further. I encourage you and the other members of the Commission to go on record in support of legislation to remove all elected officials from the Commission. I support such legislation. I believe this will help burnish MHDC's reputation as one of the best run housing commissions in the country, allow the board to focus on its mission of providing affordable housing to Missourians, and remove any appearance that politics may play a part in MHDC's decisions.

Again, thank you for your service, and do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Blunt". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "M" and a cursive "Blunt".

Matt Blunt